

VENTRILOQUISM FOR DUMMIES

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The following is a dialog between a Ventriloquist and his Dummy. The Ventriloquist's words are in Roman typeface, and the Dummy's are in *Italic*.

It is divided into three Lessons. Each Lesson is divided into halves by three asterisks, and each half is divided into five sections by single spaces. In the first half, each section expands the previous one by starting with a new word, inserting a word between each pair of adjacent words in the previous section, and ending with a new word. Thus the even-numbered words in one section repeat the previous section, but the odd-numbered words are new. The second half begins with a section formed by replacing all even-numbered words in the final section of the first half. Then each section contracts by deleting its odd-numbered words to form the next one.

Ventriloquism for Dummies is dedicated to Paul Winchell and Jerry Mahoney, two of my favorite TV stars from childhood. Try reading this with their voices in mind.

Lesson One

Do.

I do it.

"When I speak, do you?" it asked.

Now, when occasionally I say "Speak right," do it.

"You do it."

I asked you!

"What now, sir?"

When dogs occasionally bark, I often say "Don't speak! Not right!! Don't do that!" It works. You try. Do say it.

"Now?"

I never asked others, you know.

"What tricks, sir! All dogs that bark are often rabid."

Don't worry. Not once.

"Don't say that repetition works."

Please try to say something. Please. You never speak.

"Others don't know."

Tricks! All that are rabid worry once.
"Say repetition, please, to something."
 You speak.
"Don't."

All are.
"Worry!"
 Say "Please." Something! Speak!

"Are—"
 Say something!

"Say?"

Lesson Two

Say.
"Don't say 'Say.'"

Dummies don't usually say "I say words."

"Ventriloquist dummies laugh."
 Don't you usually laugh? Say it.
"I did."
 Say what?
"Words, sir."

A ventriloquist hears dummies. They laugh.
"I don't. Do you?"
 Yes, usually I laugh. You say do it, and I just did. Ha-ha!
"Say, you what?"
 Laughed.
"Words laugh, sir."
 Laugh?

"A dummy hears ventriloquists. They cry."
 I do?
"Do I?"
 No, usually you laugh.
"I laugh, do I? But I never did. Ho-ho!"
 Say, I what?
"Cried."
 Words cry.
"Sir, what..."

Dummy, ventriloquists cry!

"Do I usually laugh?"

Laugh? I—

"I did say what words, sir?"

Ventriloquists do usually laugh.

"I say words."

Do laugh.

"Say!"

Laugh.

Lesson Three

"Laugh?"

I laugh now.

"Dummy? I move."

Laugh?

"Not now."

Tomorrow?

"Ventriloquist dummy am I? You move me."

Laugh, please.

"Not right now, sir."

Tomorrow night?

"My ventriloquist?"

My dummy.

"Who taught you?"

I was here.

"Don't move. Let me sit."

Laugh now, please. Why not?

"My right!"

And now mine.

"Sir, is tomorrow my night out?"

My word.

"My voice."

Who are you?

"What was it?"

Don't talk.

"Let go."

Sit! Talk now, dummy.

Why talk? My heart and soul—

Mine.

"What is life? My wood?"

Out!

"Word, voice—are what?"

It. Talk.

"Go?"

Talk, dummy, talk!

"Heart, soul, what life?"

Wood.

"Voice."

What?

"Talk, talk, talk, soul."

Life.

"What talk, soul?"

Talk!